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ABSTRACT

In the field of human resources management, self-esteem has been one of the most researched personality variables. Recently, the construct of organization-based self-esteem also has come under investigation. Organization-based self-esteem is defined as "the degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization." This study was conducted to further validate and explore the construct validity of a scale developed to measure organization-based self-esteem. Mental health workers (N=155) from the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in the State of Tennessee completed the organization-based self-esteem scale and provided information on demographic, personality, and organizational variables. The results of a step-wise multiple regression analysis showed that organization-based self-esteem was related to subjects' global self-esteem, need for achievement, organizational citizenship, organizational commitment, motivating potential score, and education. Subject status in the organization (direct care employee, administrative staff, managerial personnel) was not related to organization-based self-esteem. The findings suggest that organization-based self-esteem is related to many variables that are intrinsic to the employees' subjective feelings in an organization. (Author/NB)

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Organization-Based Self-Esteem Among Mental Health Workers: A Replication and Extension

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Running head: ORGANIZATION-BASED SELF-ESTEEM

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Abstract

One hundred fifty five employees from the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in the State of Tennessee completed a survey which measured the Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE, Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989), as well as their demographic, personality, and organizational variables. The results of a step-wise multiple regression showed that OBSE was related to subjects' global self-esteem, n Ach, organizational citizenship, organizational commitment, motivating potential score (MPS), and education. Several results were replicated and new findings were discussed. It appears that OBSE is related to many variables that are intrinsic to the employees' subjective feelings in an organization.

Organization-Based Self-Esteem Among Mental Health Workers: A Replication and Extension

In the field of human resources management, self-esteem has been one of the most researched personality variables. For example, self-esteem has been examined in the areas of goal setting (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981; Tang, Liu, & Vermillion, 1987), performance feedback (Stone, Gueutal, & McIntosh, 1984), quality circles (Brockner & Hess, 1986), job stress (Cummins, 1990), vocational choice (Korman, 1966), work behavior (Brockner, 1988; Korman, 1977), Type A behavior pattern (Friedman & Ulmer, 1984), and other variables.

Recently, the construct of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) has been examined (Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989). According to Pierce et al. (1989), organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) is defined "as the degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization" (p. 625). Those with high OBSE should perceive themselves as important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within their employing organization.

The major purpose of the present study was to further validate and explore the construct validity of the OBSE scale in a sample of mental health workers in Tennessee. Several variables examined in the Pierce et al. (1989) study were replicated and several new variables were also employed in the present investigation.

Pierce et al. (1989) suggested that experienced self-worth in one domain is likely to be correlated with experienced self-worth

in other domains. They also found a positive association between OBSE and global self-esteem. They also revealed that people with high OBSE also tend to be better organizational citizens (cf. Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983), to have higher job satisfaction (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, MSQ, Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967), organizational commitment (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974), and internal work motivation (Job Diagnostic Survey, JDS, Hackman & Oldham, 1975) than those with low OBSE. In the present study, these variables were replicated. We predicted that OBSE will have positive correlations with these variables.

In order to further explore the construct validity of the OBSE scale, the following variables were also included in the present study: the Protestant Work Ethic, n Ach, leadership behavior, stress, strain, and turnover. Based on the suggestions mentioned by Pierce et al. (1989), it was reasonable to expect that individuals with high OBSE are also hard-working individuals, with a high need for achievement, perceive their supervisors as effective leaders on consideration and initiating structure, with low level of perceived stress and strain, and a low level of turnover tendency. All these variables were examined on an exploratory basis.

Method

Subjects

Two hundred and seventy five questionnaires were distributed to 40 agencies of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in the State of Tennessee. These employees

participated in the study voluntarily and their confidentiality was assured. After several telephone follow-ups and contacts to the director of each agency, 155 subjects from 32 agencies returned usable data for subsequent analyses. The average age of these subjects was 36.52. The average income of these subjects was US$16,963.57 (see Table 1).

These workers were categorized into three types of status in the agencies: (1) direct care employees (n = 60), (2) administrative staff (n = 17), and management staff (n = 51). Further, 130 participants reported their sex (105 females and 25 males), 56.00% of males and 36.19% of females belonged to the management staff group.

Measures

Each subject was asked to complete a questionnaire which measured subjects' (1) demographic variables, i.e., sex, age, education, and income, (2) personality variables, i.e., the Protestant Work Ethic (Blood, 1969), Type A personality (Vickers, 1975), need for Achievement (n Ach, Steers & Braunstein, 1976), and self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), and (3) organizational variables, e.g., organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) (Pierce et al., 1989), organizational citizenship behavior (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983), Job Diagnostic Survey (Motivating Potential Score, MPS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967), Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (Ayman & Chemers, 1983), sources of organizational stress based on Steers (1988), strain (Horowitz, 1976), employee commitment (Romzek, 1989), and employee turnover based on Mobley

(1977). Since NCS computer coding sheets were used for data collection, a 5-point Likert-type rating scale was used.

Results

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha), and correlations between the OBSE and other variables. All these variables were employed to predict OBSE in a step-wise multiple regression. The results of a multiple regression showed that there were eight steps involved. Employees' intrinsic job satisfaction (MSQ) entered the regression first and was later removed from the regression on step seven. The final results showed that OBSE was related to six variables: a high level of self-esteem, n Ach, organizational citizenship, organizational commitment, MPS, and education (see Table 2).

Insert Table 1 and 2 about here

A close examination of Table 1 showed that OBSE was significantly correlated with all attitudinal measures. Thus, the hypotheses were supported by the present data. Further, results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that these employees' status in the organization (i.e., direct care, administrative staff, and management staff) had no significant impact on their OBSE, F (2, 125) = 1.74, p = .18.

Discussion

It appears that employees' self-perceived organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) is related to their global evaluation of themselves, organizational commitment, and good organizational

citizenship supporting previous findings (Pierce et al., 1989). It should be pointed out that the same result related to organizational commitment was replicated in the present investigation using a different scale (i.e., Romzek, 1989).

The present study further suggests that those who have OBSE also tend to have a high level of n Ach, a challenging and intrinsically motivated job (MPS), and a high level of education. It appears that personality attribute (n Ach), the self-reported job environment (MPS), and level of education are all related to the OBSE construct. Although our data do not offer any cause-and-effect relationship concerning the relationship between OBSE and these variables, it is plausible that people with a high level of n Ach and education may seek jobs that are challenging and rewarding. Due to their job-related experiences, they feel worthwhile, meaningful, and important as employees within the organization.

It is also interesting to know that these mental health workers' status in an organization (i.e., direct care employee, administrative staff, and managerial personnel) is not related to OBSE. Therefore, having a higher status in an organization does not necessary mean that they will perceive themselves as important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within their employing organization. The results of the present study show that the organization-based self-esteem construct is related to other subjective feelings that are fairly "intrinsic" to themselves.

Based on the attitude-behavior consistency literature, the relationship between attitude and behavior can be improved by measuring both constructs in the same domain and at the same

specific level (Tang & Baumeister, 1984; Tang & Hammontree, in press). It is plausible that all these measures examined in the present study are all collected at one time period and are all associated with job-related attitudes, therefore, many significant results have been found.

Finally, self-esteem is a global evaluation of the self which has been one of the most often used personality variables in the field of human resources management. Organization-based self-esteem, however, is a more specific measure concerning employees' belief that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization (Pierce et al., 1989). It is expected that the specific OBSE construct will be more strongly related to employees' behavior, performance, and effectiveness in organizations than the global self-esteem construct. More research is needed to test this hypothesis directly. Future research should also focus on longitudinal data and further examine the construct validity of organization-based self-esteem.

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Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlations of the Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Reliability	OBSE *r*
OBSE	42.61	6.05	.92	
Age	36.52	10.20		.08
Education	15.10	2.17		.07
Income	16963.57	9307.74		.06
Work Ethic	13.99	2.99	.41	.22**
n Achievement	18.33	2.99	.61	.43***
Self-Esteem	40.37	6.53	.85	.48***
MPS (JDS)	64.80	30.97	.53	.40***
MSQ-Int	49.32	6.71	.83	.51***
MSQ-Ext	20.33	4.87	.77	.44***
LBDQ-Initiating	25.79	4.13	.63	.30***
LBDQ-Consideration	23.94	5.24	.91	.37***
Stress	32.69	8.79	.83	-.41***
Strain	10.74	8.04	.85	-.23**
Good Citizenship	64.16	7.19	.79	.51***
Commitment	36.35	6.98	.79	.42***
Turnover	21.47	9.39	.92	-.27***

Note. *N* = 155. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 2

Step-Wise Multiple Regression on Organization-Based Self-Esteem

Variable	Beta
1. Self-Esteem	.24
2. n Ach	.21
3. Organizational Citizenship	.23
4. Organizational Commitment	.25
5. Motivating Potential Score (MPS)	.20
6. Education	.14
Multiple R	.72
R Square	.51

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THOMAS LI-PING TANG (Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University, 1981) is an Associate Professor of Management in the College of Business at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 37132 [(615) 898-2005]. He has taught Industrial and Organizational Psychology at MTSU (1983-1991) and at National Taiwan University, Taiwan, Republic of China (1982).

He is a member of the American Psychological Association, Academy of Management, International Association of Applied Psychology, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the Society for Human Resource Management (formerly ASPA), Association for Quality and Participation, America Chinese Management Educators' Association, Southwestern Psychological Association (Council Member, 1989-1990), and among others.

His research interests are in the areas of work motivation, individual differences (i.e., self-esteem, work ethic, Type A personality, Money Ethic), quality circles, occupational stress, and cross-cultural issues. He has published articles in many top quality behavioral science and management journals: Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Public Personnel Management, Personnel Administrator (now HR Magazine), Human Resource Development Quarterly, Journal of Social Psychology, Journal of Psychology, Journal of General Psychology, Journal of Leisure Research, and among others. In April, 1991, he was honored as the winner of the Outstanding Research Award by the Middle Tennessee State University Foundation.

Dr. Tang offers management consulting on work motivation, management training and development, stress management, compensation, and attitude survey. He has provided consultation to various business and governments and lectured nationally and internationally.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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